



The Car in British Society

Working Paper 3: Policy Review

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Elizabeth Gilliard

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives

This work package was intended as a scrutiny of government policies and decision making structures which have a bearing on car dependence. The premise was that transport policy has been 'anti-car' in the last decade or so, but that other policies – land use, health, education, etc. – have tended to create the need to travel and, largely, to travel by car. It was seen as important to address the 'policy muddle' and consider what policy alternatives exist.

The emphasis here is local and regional policy and delivery: to some extent, the Working Paper does not review the Government's success (or otherwise) in planning for the things for which it is more directly responsible. That said, the Highways Agency is now drawn formally into the Regional Planning regime, and the regional regimes are drawn upwards by the requirement to reflect National Policy Statements introduced under the Planning Act 2008.

Methods

A desktop study reviewed published policy and legislation, as well as research reports on the impacts of policies and their recommendations for change.

Exploratory interviews were held with local, regional and central government officers and with a bus operator and a property developer. These interviews sought to learn lessons to feed into this review and to test an interview format for possible wider application.

Key findings

i) Policies

The key findings relate to transport policy and to other policy areas.

The desk research found that, in spite of some heavy rhetoric, transport policy actions have not been anti-car. The long-standing, cross-party efforts to reduce car use have been targeted at specific problems, such as congestion, the environment or social exclusion. These policies have generally been linked to the opportunity to provide alternatives: city centres or local neighbourhoods, stretches of motorway with high levels of local traffic, social inclusion initiatives looking at different means of service delivery.

Investment in highways has remained broadly stable in real terms since 1996 and has remained high, at around 40% of the Department's expenditure, even during recent years when rail renewals have been unprecedented. Of course, expenditure on roads is not direct expenditure on cars, since the purpose of highways improvements is often to provide freer flows for freight, but cars have the benefit of these improvements. There is no pretence among policy makers at any level that the car will be other than the main mode of travel in the UK. There also appears to be no policy objective to reduce the car's role: only to reduce its impact in certain environments.

This finding was echoed by the interviews: a good deal has been achieved in targeted traffic reduction, but the car remains the core mode for many journeys and policy is aimed at *'public transport as well as car: making the most of the assets we've got'* rather than a blanket approach. It was often noted that, whilst there are many good examples of specific traffic reduction and of access improvements, there are also many places in which the new tools to achieve change are yet to be applied.

Policies in services which create a demand to travel have increasingly had an environmental requirement, which has supported dialogue between transport and other policy areas. The initial thrust for this dialogue was Accessibility Planning, which required co-operation to improve access to services for people suffering from social exclusion, with access improved by different approaches to service delivery.

Nonetheless, whilst there are many good examples of policy cohesion, there are still many failures. Among the successes is transport's recognition of the imperatives in other policy areas, which has, for example, increased travel planning at major facilities as a better approach than raising transport objections which may ultimately fail at Inquiry. Among the failures are specific examples of poor engagement in some policy areas, housing being the most notable.

ii) Decision making structures

Perhaps the most interesting finding in this work package was a strong sense that policy structures have been put in place, which help deliver better results on the ground and will also tackle the long run implications of decisions taken now in planning, transport and other services.

These tie in economic, social, land use and transport decisions, with iterations of joint working which provide consistency between different government levels of decision making and delivery.

These structures are relatively new and it was often said that they are still bedding in. There was a general welcome for further strengthening from current legislation and reviews. There were several positive comments on the review of governance arrangements (the 'Sub-National Review') which tightens the decision making loop, so that economic, social, environmental and infrastructure decisions are made in concert rather than in conflict. The new National Policy Statements relating to strategic infrastructure will be subject to wide consultation and should then be taken into account in Regional Strategies and local plans and policies as these documents are updated over time.

Again, whilst there were examples of joint, cross-boundary planning overcoming historic tensions between neighbouring authorities, there were also examples of authorities which work together at the planning and strategy stage but then break ranks when it comes to budget allocation.

Although there was widespread acceptance that this new integrated policy and delivery chain has some way to go before it works fully, the strongest concern among interviewees was that it might be replaced with if a new government comes to power. This was explicitly not a political comment – new Ministers are expected to want to make their own imprint; it was seen as key that the development and application of new policies should be undertaken in a way that facilitates continued cross-boundary and cross-disciplinary working.

Conclusions and recommendations

The tentative conclusion on policy is: ***don't fix it; it seems to be working***. That is, of course, too broad brush to be the entire conclusion.

The upbeat parts of the conclusions are:

- the decision making mechanisms appear to be delivering some good results at local level, in terms of traffic reduction, social inclusion and co-operative working across spatial and sectoral boundaries;

- there remains an opportunity to spread these 'wins', since many smaller towns and cities, some parts of metropolitan areas, and many rural areas are yet to benefit – there remains some 'low-hanging fruit';
- these local results (in transport and other neighbourhood issues) have increasingly clear links to policies at town, city, sub-regional and regional level;
- regional policies guide long-term planning, so that future development should be focused on corridors which are also accessible by other means than the private car;
- the development of policies and structures has been incremental and evidence based: research has recommended methods which have been tried; further research has led to modifications or expansion. The result is a system which has been developed through a thorough process over almost two decades, and which is now seen as potentially effective.

On the other hand:

- the better local outcomes are piecemeal;
- there was some indication that the more positive outcomes may be correlated with population density, since cities lend themselves to public transport provision and to the supply of services more locally and private transport is more attractive in low density areas;
- the improved communications and joint working across different tiers of government and across policy areas have some notable exceptions when it comes to budget choices;
- some policy areas are less inclined towards joint working
- there is real nervousness that the system may be changed just as it is beginning to settle in and show benefits.

The recommendations from this are:

- 1) National frameworks for local policy should continue to focus on joint working, both within transport, between the different relevant external policy sectors (e.g. land use planning, health, education, housing, etc) and between the different tiers of governance (i.e. sub-local, local, sub-regional, regional and central).
- 2) A systematic review should be undertaken of the incentives for joint working, to remove imperatives which militate against it. Chief among these are Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and therefore policy strings attached to local

budgets, which often drive decision away from sustainable travel. There could be benefit, too, in a 'best practice' review of local authority relationships; clearer reporting across the board of Local Transport Plan (LTP) outcomes, to clarify correlations between density, resources, policies, joint working and long and short run outcomes.

- 3) Since the strongest message of the policy review was that the local joint working is leading towards better decision making and delivery both for the short and the long term, there might be a case for readdressing joint working in Whitehall, to seek similar coherence among social, economic, environmental and transport policies.

- 4) From the specific point of 'The Car in British Society', the piecemeal achievements of policy and decision making frameworks create an opportunity. It should be possible to understand where car dependence has been reduced and where it hasn't. This is not only a matter of reviewing LTP outcomes, but of working closely with local authorities to measure the linkages between car dependence and spatial, social and other environmental factors.

1. THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CAR USE

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Policy review

This working paper looks at government policies and programmes relating to car use since the 1995 'Car Dependence' report. The review forms part of a wider study funded by the RAC Foundation which aims to offer deeper insight into the changing nature and causes of people's car use behaviours in the context of a range of institutional and policy factors that might influence this. A copy of the main report for the study and the other accompanying working papers which inform this can be downloaded from the RAC Foundation website at www.racfoundation.org.

The paper presents the findings of a desk-based review of key UK policy documents published between 1995 to the present, most of which can be found on Government websites, and on a series of key stakeholder interviews, undertaken in 2008. We are grateful for the time given for these interviews. Representatives of two Government Offices, four Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) – one County Council, a Public Transport Authority and two Metropolitan City Councils – met us, and we had telephone discussions with the Department for Transport, a bus operator and a property developer. The main purpose of these was to pilot a method of gaining insight into the impact of policy, so the range of interviews is not as full as might be liked. The policy insights gained are used here, though, of course, a pilot interview programme is not fully representative.

The paper reviews stated policy, the application of public finance to transport and in particular to car versus other modes, and then aims to assess the outcomes of government policies and programmes. Finally, it looks at emerging policy trends, with a view to gauging the likely impact of government and local government policy and action on car use in the years ahead. It finds that a structure of policy making and delivery has been developed which appears to be delivering mode shift in targeted areas and with targeted groups. From a policy perspective, the main conclusion is: *Don't fix it; it seems to be working.*

2 GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATING TO CAR USE

2.1 The low-hanging fruit

The RAC Foundation 'Car dependence' report in 1995 had a significant effect on official policies and attitudes to car use. The emphasis shifted towards reining in growth in car use by focusing on modal shift for those journeys which could easily be switched. The Department (shorthand for the DoT, DETR, DTLR and now DfT) began to require local authorities to show how they would achieve mode shift, and the Department provided research and advice on how best to achieve this.

The advice series which began in these years covered primary issues such as the design of bus priorities, the management of parking, the preparation and delivery of cycling and walking strategies, etc. It also covered related factors: reducing crime and the fear of crime on trains and buses and walking and waiting for public transport; specific concerns of young people, elderly people, people from visible ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities; community severance, place-making, streetscapes and street management; information provision (off system, static in-journey and real time); travel awareness, car sharing, home zones, school / work / attractor travel planning, and 'smarter choices'.

Special initiatives were introduced over time, such as Rural Bus Partnerships and Urban Bus Partnerships, Wheels to Work and other travel projects with unemployed or young people. The Department provided underpinning assessment and policy advice through such frameworks as the Local Transport Plan and Accessibility Planning¹. The detailed advice is frequently updated by the Department². Critically, it describes methods to assess the impact of policies and schemes, with examples of good practice.

This practical advice and policy guidance has been the core of the Department's efforts to help local authorities and transport providers 'pick the low hanging fruit': that is, influence mode choice where there is a realistic alternative to car use, often by improving the relative attractiveness of the alternatives.

¹ Department for Transport *Local transport initiatives*. Website updated frequently. Accessed Jan 2009 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/localtransportinitiatives>

² Department for Transport *Sustainable travel*. Website updated frequently. Accessed Jan 2009 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/>

The perspective in our 2008 interviews with stakeholders was that there is still some way to go before the 'low hanging fruit' is plucked:

"People's lifestyles are so much more complex and people are prepared to travel quite long distances. So we need to start where we can start – where there is a clear alternative for the journey." LTA Director

"There has been a lot of investment in public transport, cycling and walking. It probably hasn't achieved as much as hoped: we're struggling with modal shift." LTA Director

"We have seen local benefits: reduced car dependence in certain areas. We now need to become more ambitious for the future." LTA Director

"Our research highlights many 'dog leg' journeys. Cars used on A>B because the driver goes on to C later because although both legs are suitable for public transport, the whole is easier and more flexible in the car." Bus operator

*"If people **can** get there by car, we're still trying to create the public transport option. Breaking down various barriers – not just 'is there a bus', but safety, attitudes, etc."*
LTA Transport Planner

This emphasis on 'picking the low hanging fruit', which followed the RAC Foundation 1995 report, was, however, a switch in focus and delivery rather than a new departure in policy.

2.2 The SACTRA years

The shift in roads policy from 'predict and provide' is generally perceived as stemming from the SACTRA report³ 1994. This report examined traffic generation on new roads, and concluded that, whilst much traffic is the release of suppressed demand, the expansion of road capacity does induce traffic growth.

³ SACTRA (Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment) (1994) Trunk roads and the generation of traffic. London: HMSO

“A landmark report by the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) in 1994, *Trunk roads and the generation of traffic*, showed that building new roads can generate extra traffic.”⁴

Externally, this appeared to have changed the face of policy thinking about cars and roads, but, in reality, the commissioning of the SACTRA enquiry was part of an emerging trend. For example, the ambitious roads programme *Roads for Prosperity* announced in 1989⁵ gave rise to concerns about the wider consequences of ever-growing car demand. The anti-roads protests in the 1990s⁶ further raised the profile of the debate around cars and the environment, and there was media pressure for a re-think. In December 1994, the Secretary of State announced a ‘refocusing’ of the roads programme; in effect, a radical cut.

Two years earlier, on 15th December 1992, the Secretary of State had announced a consultation with local authorities on a ‘package approach’ to local transport capital funding, with a stronger emphasis on mode shift away from car use, especially in urban areas. This approach developed over time to require all local transport authorities, singly or in partnerships, to present a systematic analysis of the transport problems and opportunities in their area and to show an integrated package of measures to tackle problems and meet opportunities. It was a fundamental shift from allocating local roads funds and public transport funds under separate bidding systems.

The policy trend over these years was set in the context of reducing the car’s impact on the environment. Transport research had been looking at modal shift since the 1960s⁷. In March 1997, the Road Traffic Reduction Act⁸ was passed, requiring local authorities to assess local road traffic and forecast traffic growth, and, unless they could state reasons for not doing, to specify targets for (a) *a reduction in the levels of local road traffic in the area*, or (b) *a reduction in the rate of growth in the levels of such traffic*.

⁴ Department for Transport (accessed March 2009) *A new deal for trunk roads in England: understanding the new approach*.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/economics/rdg/multimodal/aneuadealfortrunkroadsinengla5492?page=1>

⁵ Department of Transport (1989) *White paper: roads for prosperity*. Cm 693 London: HMSO

⁶ BBC *On this day: 18th January 1996*. Website accessed Jan 2009
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/18/newsid_2530000/2530307.stm

⁷ E.g. Buchanan, C. et al. (1963) *Traffic in towns*. Report for the Department of Transport. London: HMSO; Quarmby, D. A. (1967) Choice of travel mode for the journey to work: some findings. *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy* vol. 1, pp. 273—314

http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-journals/jtep/pdf/Volume_1_No_3_273-314.pdf;

⁸ HMSO (1997) *Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997*.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1997/ukpga_19970054_en_1

2.3 Labour government

The Labour Government elected in May 1997 made a strong commitment to integrated transport and to reducing car use. The election Manifesto promises had been relatively modest:

- efficient and clean transport for all;
- an effective and integrated transport policy at national, regional and local level that will provide genuine choice to meet people's needs;
- catering for all the familiar modes of transport: cars - whether owned, leased or shared; taxis; buses; bicycles and motorcycles;
- offering quality public transport wherever possible; and
- helping to protect the environment.

The new Secretary of State, John Prescott, expressed much higher ambitions, stating to the House in 1998:

"I will have failed if in five years time there are not... far fewer journeys by car. It's a tall order but I urge you to hold me to it".⁹ (Hansard, 1998, column 1071)

2.3.1 Road Traffic Reduction

One of the new government's earliest pieces of advice to local authorities was guidance on the Road Traffic Reduction Act enacted under the previous government. This guidance moved to a wider focus, not merely traffic. The role of transport policy was described as:

- promoting environmental objectives;
- promoting economic development across all parts of the country;
- promoting greater efficiency in the use of scarce resources including road and rail capacity;
- enhancing the vitality of town and city centres;
- meeting the needs of rural areas;
- reducing social exclusion and taking account of the basic accessibility needs of all sectors of society, including disabled people;

⁹ Hansard (1998) *Oral questions, 20 October 1998, column 1071.*
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/vo981020/debtext/81020-03.htm>

- ensuring a high standard of safety across all modes, and promoting a travelling environment in which personal security is not compromised; and crucially
- promoting greater awareness of the issues throughout society.

The guidance¹⁰ says that:

“Local authorities may have a variety of motives for wishing to reduce traffic levels or their rate of growth in a particular area, including making roads safer, improving the local environment, reducing congestion, benefiting the local economy or improving air quality”.

In 1998, a Transport White Paper¹¹ was launched with great fanfare, as the first White Paper in a generation to cover the whole of transport. Whilst the White Paper aimed at behaviour change, mode shift and tackling car use, it was explicit in supporting car ownership and was generally viewed as aiming not for a reduction in car use but more a levelling off of growth. Nonetheless, it was optimistic about changing car use:

“Using the car less is not as impossible as some think it is. Nearly three-quarters of all journeys are under five miles and 45% are less than two miles. Even though many of us could walk or cycle these short distances, or catch a bus, we have increasingly used our cars - a quarter of all car journeys are now under two miles”.

It also quoted the 1995 RAC Foundation Car Dependence report:

“A recent study for the RAC concluded that most car trips do not have to be made by car. Using a car currently seems the sensible choice because of factors such as physical and time constraints and the poor quality of alternatives. Some car trips (up to 30%) were judged to be hardly necessary at all or a perfectly good alternative was already available but ignored. This shows the potential for people to use their cars less without making great sacrifices”.

¹⁰ DETR (1997) *Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997: draft guidance to local traffic authorities.* <http://www.ocs.polito.it/biblioteca/mobilita/RTRAguidance1997.pdf>

¹¹ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1998) *A new deal for transport: better for everyone.* London: HMSO <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/>

The White Paper argued that *“increasingly, people do not have real choices. For many people using a car is now no longer a choice but a necessity”*, but held that by improving the alternatives to car use, behaviour would change.

“People said (in consultation) they want more choice on whether to use their cars and more reliable journeys when they do; they want a better public transport system and one that doesn’t let them down; they want better protection for the environment and they want less pollution because they are worried about their health”.

2.4 A leap of faith

There was, however, really very little research evidence that these policies could be delivered in practice. Ambitions such as traffic reduction, constraining or reversing car use and significant mode shift for personal and freight movement were identified as firm policies without any examples anywhere in the world of how this might be achieved without road pricing, for which no powers yet existed in the UK. The same applied to the wider goals for transport such as promoting economic growth, enhancing the vitality of town and city centres, and tackling social exclusion: it was more a statement of faith than a matter of evidence that transport could deliver these results.

Certainly, the Department’s own road traffic forecasts showed no expectation of success in these stated policies and the National Road Traffic Forecasts of the time¹² anticipated there would be a steady growth in road traffic, albeit at a lower rate than previous estimates.

In our stakeholder interviews, these former aspirations were described as unachievable:

“In the optimistic days of the White Paper, we almost felt we could have a blanket approach and we’ve learned that we can’t. We can’t tackle the problem without breaking it down, carbon, emissions, etc. At the moment they’re probably the stronger argument. Remove that and we still have to deal with the sheer volume [of traffic]. There will still be a need to tackle the total demand for movement. There are always going to be reasons to try to manage the movement by car – free flowing, ambience, visual, safety, quality of life areas where people can walk around without being intimidated.” LTA Director

¹² Department for Transport (2005) *National road traffic forecasts*. London: HMSO <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/economics/ntm/ntmdatasources/nrtf1997/onalroadtrafficforecasts3014.pdf>

“The government message is more that driving more slowly costs you less and is better for the environment and safety. Bringing all that together. To some extent managing car use.” GO Transport Lead

“We have to be much cleverer at understanding what journeys can be made by other means and indeed that some journeys are better made by car.” LTA Director

“Local transport policy is not necessarily about getting people out of cars. Other options are not always viable.” GO Transport Lead

*“It’s not sensible to expect anybody **not** to drive [in rural areas]”.* GO Transport Lead

2.5 Transport policy development to 2009

In 2000, the 10 Year Plan¹³ proposed radical investment in transport, with the aim of supporting economic growth, social cohesion and environmental objectives. The Plan presented a strategy for transport aiming to tackle congestion and pollution through developing integrated transport, public and private partnerships for funding, and a large programme of new projects. The 10 Year Plan promised £121 billion of spending to deliver its targets. The government’s forecast of the allocation of investment sheds some light on the traffic reduction aims: the table below shows that less than a quarter was to be spent on local transport outside London (of which, of course, a proportion would be spent on roads).

Table 1: Ten Year Plan 2000: proposed spending £bn

Rail	49
Strategic	
Roads	16.2
London	17.9
Local Transport	28.2
Other	9.7
Total	121

¹³ Department for Transport (2000) *Transport 2010: the Ten Year Plan*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/transporttenyearplan2000>

The 10 Year Plan was criticised because its emphasis on investment in strategic infrastructure was seen as likely to promote longer distance commuting and more dispersed land use¹⁴ and to promote “mobile-intensive lifestyles”¹⁵.

Alongside the 10 Year Plan, the Transport Act 2000, which focused mainly on revised structures for rail and air in the UK, introduced powers for local authorities to introduce road user charging schemes. The critical concession here was that revenues would be seen as coming from a charge, not a tax, and therefore could be hypothecated so that local authorities could use road charging revenues to invest in the local transport network. In the event, very few authorities took advantage of these powers. In our pilot interviews in 2008, the comment was made that local pricing is likely to require stronger government leadership:

“Ultimately, some form of pricing might be needed to manage congestion, but it would not be immediately accepted in smaller cities and towns. Pricing is seen as a tax: not part of an overall package of charges, but an infringement. Government is abdicating – there are some things a local authority can’t do without a fully supported national framework”. LTA Director

The most recent relevant legislation is the Transport Act (2008)¹⁶. Its high profile provisions relate to potential changes in bus service design, procurement and delivery. Whilst these affect the alternatives to the car, the most interesting provisions of the Act for this review are those relating to changes in governance structures. These pave the way for a reassessment of where decision-making and delivery sit in transport, along with the duty to consider links to regional economic, spatial and social aims (see the governance section, below.)

2.6 Targets on car use

The 1998 White Paper described a range of measurements and targets which would be developed – public transport use, national traffic reduction, rail freight, walking, airport journey mode split – alongside existing targets on environment, emissions, road safety and local traffic reduction.

¹⁴ Independent Transport Commission (2002) *The land-use effects of the 10 Year Plan*. London http://www.trg.soton.ac.uk/itc/lu_concs.htm Report based on Hall, P. and Marshall, S. (2002) *The Government’s 10 Year Transport Plan – land use implications*. Bartlett School of Planning, University College, London

¹⁵ CPRE (2004) *Back together again*. London <http://www.cpre.org.uk/library/results/transport>

¹⁶ Department for Transport (2008) *Local Transport Bill*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/localtransportbill/>

Whilst the methodologies and therefore the targets were yet to be developed, the White Paper did aim to reduce peak journey times on the roads by 20-25% by 2010, and to reduce the road share of freight by 10%.

The Ten Year Plan set targets for growth in public transport patronage and for improvements in the provision of alternatives to the car, but no target relating to car use¹⁷. There were ambitious targets for congestion reduction, especially in large urban areas (from a forecast growth in congestion of 15% by 2010 to an 8% reduction), and there were emissions and road safety targets.

By the 2004 White Paper¹⁸ targets were again set for emissions, road safety and public transport. Whilst the language continues the wider ambitions of the 1998 White Paper (environment, placemaking, economy etc.), the four objectives and seven targets set in the 2004 White Paper included no mention of traffic reduction, not even of holding traffic level. The intriguing thing here is that, by then, traffic growth had stabilised, as has been described in previous chapters in this report.

Figure 1: Transport objectives and performance targets in the White Paper 2004

- Objective I: Support the economy through the provision of efficient and reliable inter-regional transport systems by making better use of the existing road network; reforming rail services and industry structures to deliver significant performance improvements for users; and investing in additional capacity to meet growing demand.
 1. The Department is developing better measures of inter-urban congestion and will publish a new target by July 2005. The Department will also publish annual long term projections of congestion.
 2. Improve punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent by 2006, with further improvements by 2008.
- Objective II: Deliver improvements to the accessibility, punctuality and reliability of local and regional transport systems through the approaches set out in Objective I and through increased use of public transport and other appropriate local solutions.
 3. By 2010, increase the use of public transport (bus and light rail) by more than 12 per cent in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region.
 4. The Department is developing better measures of urban congestion and will publish a new target by July 2005. The Department will also publish annual long term projections of congestion.
- Objective III: Balance the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life by improving safety and respecting the environment.
 5. Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in Great Britain in road accidents by 40 per cent and the number of children killed or seriously injured by 50 per cent, by 2010 compared with the average for 1994-98, tackling the significantly higher incidence in disadvantaged communities.
 6. Improve air quality by meeting the Air Quality Strategy targets for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1,3 butadiene. Joint with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
 7. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5 per cent below 1990 levels in line with our Kyoto commitment and move towards a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010, through measures including energy efficiency and renewables. Joint with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Trade and Industry.
- Objective IV: Improve cost-effectiveness through sound financial management, robust cost control, and clear appraisal of transport investment choices across different modes and locations.

The Department's advice on the means to achieve these objectives began in the guidance for the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997:

- traffic demand and restraint measures;
- traffic signs and driver information;
- urban traffic management and control systems;
- traffic regulation;
- permit systems;
- physical measures;
- pedestrian/vehicle restricted areas;
- pricing / road user charging;
- parking controls;
- speed limits;
- traffic calming;
- encouraging alternatives to private car use;
- development of heavy or light rail, bus services, and park and ride;
- car sharing;
- walking;
- cycling.

Alongside these tools, authorities were reminded to consider in their traffic plans the needs of elderly and disabled motorists, and also public transport users and pedestrians.

The development of this package of policies and programmes ultimately leads through to the body of guidance mentioned above on determining, delivering and measuring local transport policies and plans, from road building to infrastructure reallocation to personal behaviour change packages in the 'smarter choices' agenda¹⁹.

The Traffic Management Act (2004)²⁰ placed the emphasis on keeping traffic moving, placing *"a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities"*.

¹⁹ Department for Transport *Smarter choices*. Website updated frequently. Accessed Jan 2009 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/>

²⁰ Department for Transport (2004) *Traffic Management Act 2004*. London: TSO http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/pdf/ukpga_20040018_en.pdf

The core elements of the 'Network Management Duty' lie in co-ordinating and managing road and street works effectively, the management of incidents and event planning, but it also includes the control of parking and the management of the network as a whole. This 'Network Management Duty' continues the policy shift away from traffic reduction to a focus on reducing congestion and disruption.

Stakeholders showed support for the congestion reduction, especially the bus operator:

"[We] have to manage congestion to allow public transport to take a big step forward".

LTA Director

"We are getting much better priority (dedicated tracks, bus-ways, traffic signal preferences) from highway authorities." Bus operator

In December 2004, the Department produced guidance for Local Transport Authorities preparing the second round of Local Transport Plans (2007-2011)²¹. Just as the first LTP guidance had been more rigorous than the Package Approach guidance, the advice for the second round of LTPs built on the experience of the first LTP, and it provides a structured approach to developing local policies and plans, in partnership with others. The most significant change was this new emphasis on partnership.

Accompanying the LTP guidance was guidance on "Accessibility Planning": a new approach to partnership building, which required local transport authorities and other service providers to work together to provide access to services, both through transport provision and, more importantly, through the innovative provision of services with the aim of reducing the need to travel²². Uniquely, parallel guidance was provided for officers in the Departments of Health, Education and Skills, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Jobcentre Plus (DTI). This initiative arose from the Cabinet Office as a cross-government policy to reduce social exclusion²³. The Department and Local Transport Authorities invested heavily in Accessibility Planning, with new systems, training and policies aiming at opening to people in socially excluded areas the services and opportunities available to others.

²¹ Department for Transport (2004) *Full guidance on local transport plans: second edition*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltpl/guidance/fltp/fullguidanceonlocaltransport3657>

²² Department for Transport (2004) *Guidance on accessibility planning in Local Transport Plans*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltpl/accessibility/>

²³ Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Making the connections: transport and social exclusion*. UK Cabinet Office <http://www.equalityni.org/uploads/word/ResponseDRDfutureinvestmentrailnetworkNI.doc>

This work was the start of the partnership approach that is now embedded in a range of policy areas, as described in the 'governance' section, below. In the interviews for this research, it was felt that Accessibility Planning has made a considerable difference to the local transport planning process:

"It has made a difference, bringing together different services to work on exclusion".

GO Transport Lead

"It has had a modest effect on service providers". LTA Director

"We largely focus accessibility planning on deprivation and low car ownership. Rural areas, car may not be available to an individual; young job seekers, etc. Some employment zones have difficulty getting staff and some people can't get work but can't get there". LTA Director

"Getting recognition among politicians of the fundamental role of transport in making society hang together, e.g. social services can't be effective if people can't access the services." LTA Director

The Highways Agency (HA) is the Secretary of State's executive arm for the delivery of strategic roads (though County Councils have responsibility for many de-trunked roads and also for other routes carrying more than local traffic). The Agency describes its primary objectives as:

"...to manage traffic, tackle congestion, provide information to road users and improve safety and journey time reliability, whilst respecting and minimising the adverse impact on the environment"²⁴.

This report shows the HA having 27 major schemes (over £5m) under construction, as well as its programmes to manage traffic on the network and to provide travel information. From the same report, the table below shows the HA's delivery against its targets:

²⁴ Highways Agency (2008) *Annual report 2007-2008*. London: TSO
http://www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/documents/Revised_Annual_Report_Accounts_25_07_08.pdf

Figure 2: Highways Agency performance against targets

Targets agreed with Ministers:		Performance in 2007-2008
Journey Reliability		Target to reduce the average vehicle delay on the 10% slowest journeys missed.
Programme of Improvements		Target partially met as a number of major projects were delayed while better value options were considered. Successful completion of the Priority Action Sites programme.
Influencing Travel Behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three new traffic information services implemented. • New travel plans introduced. • High occupancy vehicle lane opened on the M62/M606.
Road Casualty Reduction		Our share of national target ahead of plan.
Road Surface Condition		Partially achieved. Road surfaces in good condition, but delay in developing a maintenance value-for-money indicator .
Environment		Targets on air quality, biodiversity, landscape, noise and water quality all achieved.
Road User Satisfaction		Target achieved for both motorways and trunk roads.
Efficiency		Our contribution towards DfT's efficiency target exceeded target by 20%.

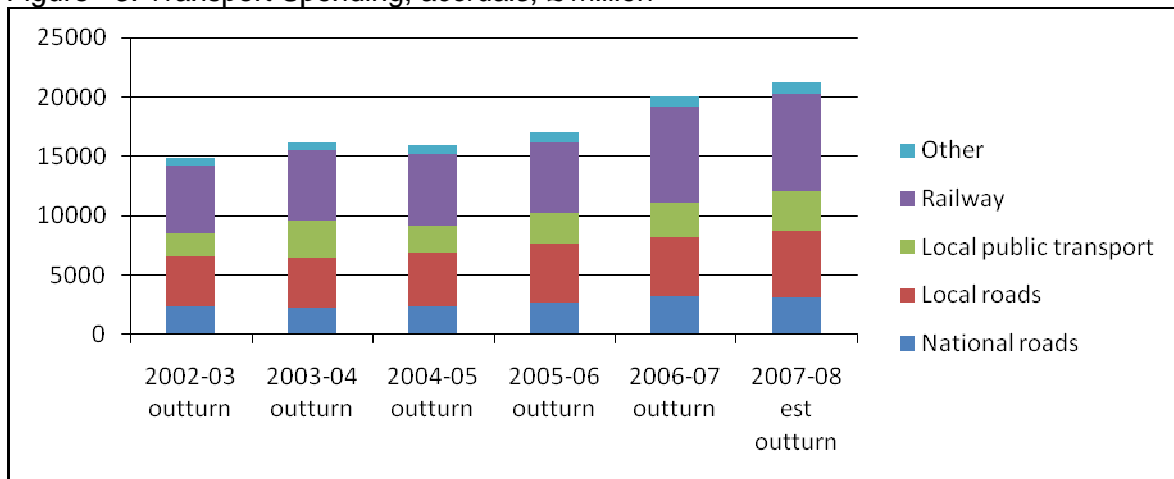
2.7 Government spending

Even with the cut from the 20bn *Roads for Prosperity*, the strategic roads programme still ran at 1.7bn p.a. in the mid 1990s²⁵. The 2008 Public Expenditure Survey²⁶ gives the breakdown of transport spending from over recent years:

²⁵ Contract Journal (1995) *More of nice chat than a great debate*. <http://www.contractjournal.com/Articles/1995/03/09/28648/more-of-a-nice-chat-than-a-great-debate.html>

²⁶ HM Treasury (2008) *Total expenditure on services by sub-function, 2002-03 to 2007-08*. PES, Table 5.2 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pespub_pes08.htm

Figure 3: Transport Spending, accruals, £ million



The table below works from the figures behind the graph above. It shows that spending patterns have been broadly stable, with the national rail network taking around 40%; the national and local road networks taking a little over 40%, and local public transport rising a little from the low teens to the high teens.

Table 2: Transport Spending, proportions

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 est
National roads	16	14	15	16	16	15
Local roads	28	26	29	29	25	26
Local public transport	13	19	14	15	14	16
Railway	39	36	38	35	40	39
Other	4	4	5	5	4	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
	14,825	16,189	15,981	17,004	20,080	21,259

Table 3 below shows the Department's description²⁷ of expenditure by mode over time. The interesting aspect of this table is its inclusion of expenditure outside the public sector. For this paper, however, the key point is that highways expenditure has remained high and relatively stable.

²⁷ Department for Transport (2008) *Transport statistics Great Britain*. London: TSO (Table 1.14) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/162469/221412/217792/421224/transportstatisticgreatbrit.pdf>

As can be seen in the two figures above, rail expenditure has increased in recent years, but it is beyond this paper's scope to consider whether that is a trend or is related to levels of renewals that are not expected in future years; the point here is that highways expenditure has remained broadly stable, in line with the stability found in traffic in the main report to which this is a working paper.

Table 3: Time series: expenditure by mode

1.14 Investment in transport: 1996/97-2006/07 ¹

	£ Million (outturn prices)										
	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Road infrastructure											
Public ²	3,583	3,267	2,957	3,071	3,344	3,643	3,955	3,621	4,079	4,313	4,756
Private	375	251	278	63	47	45
Total	3,958	3,518	3,235	3,134	3,391	3,688	3,955	3,621	4,079	4,313	4,756
Road vehicles ³											
Cars and motor cycles: household	13,300	16,100	15,800	15,100	15,400	17,400	18,300	19,800	19,000	18,400	18,200
Cars and motor cycles: other	15,700	17,900	18,600	18,900	17,600	18,900	19,500	20,500	21,800	23,600	23,000
Cars and motor cycles: total	29,100	34,000	34,400	34,000	33,000	36,300	37,800	40,300	40,800	42,000	41,200
Other vehicles	6,200	6,900	7,100	7,300	7,400	7,800	7,500	8,400	9,100	9,600	9,500
Total	35,300	40,900	41,600	41,300	40,400	44,100	45,400	48,700	49,900	50,600	50,700
Rail infrastructure ⁴											
National Rail	1,178	1,430	1,823	2,012	2,404	3,148	3,756	4,722	3,543	3,237	3,766
Other rail ⁵	1,047	898	821	1,163	386	504	485	464	729	1,219	1,265
Total	2,225	2,328	2,644	3,175	2,790	3,652	4,241	5,186	4,272	4,456	5,031
Rail rolling stock ⁴											
National Rail	47	114	176	236	554	922	566	774	897	557	326
Other rail	148	82	85	84	75	75	75	177	165	169	123
Total	195	196	261	320	629	997	641	951	1,064	726	449
Ports infrastructure ⁴	150	200	240	250	205	233	236	310	202	230	..
Airports											
Public ^{4,6}	171	216	140	161	163	57	71	70	62	116	..
Private ⁴	463	565	542	511	566	630	784	1,373	1,434	1,662	..
Total	634	781	682	673	729	687	854	1,443	1,495	1,779	..

1 Some revisions have been made to the data since last year

2 Investment in road infrastructure includes all 'patching' but excludes local authority capital expenditure on car parks. Since 2002/03 it has not been possible to separately identify all the private expenditure from the total.

3 Source: Office for National Statistics

4 Partly based on figures for calendar years.

5 Figures for Eurotunnel unavailable for 2006/07

6 Prior to 2001/02 public airports investment includes air traffic control.

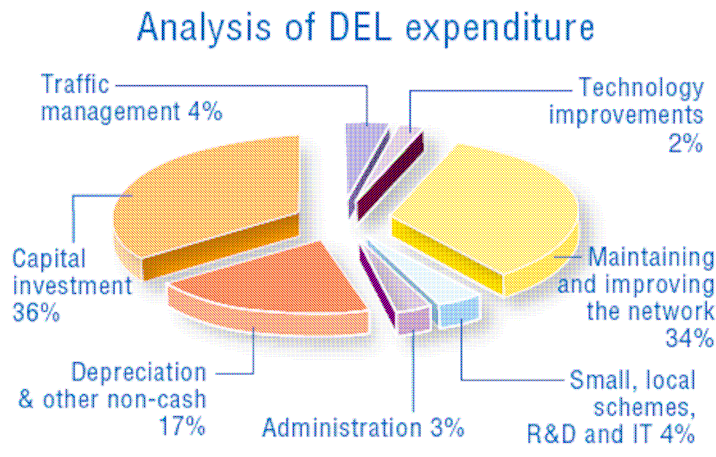
020-7944 3088

The figures in this table are outside the scope of National Statistics
Source - see Notes and Definitions

Spending by the Highways Agency²⁸ breaks down into the various components demonstrated in the graph below:

²⁸ Highways Agency (2008) *Annual report 2007-2008*. London: TSO
http://www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/documents/Revised_Annual_Report_Accounts_25_07_08.pdf

Figure 4: Highways Agency expenditure by area



From the same report, its overall budget in 2007-2008 is shown below.

Figure 5: Highways Agency expenditure 2007-2008

	2007-08 Actual £m	2007-08 Budget £m	Variance £m
Total Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)	1,807	1,812	(5)
Total Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	3,561	3,596	(35)
Total Net Resource Outturn	5,368	5,408	(40)
Capital DEL	1,054	1,062	(8)
Total Agency Request for Resources (RfR)	6,422	6,470	(48)

In addition to transport spending, other financial levers have been applied to influence travel choices, such as the fuel duty rebate for public transport, the fuel duty escalator for private cars, tougher tax regimes for company cars and differential road tax rates for cars with lower/higher emissions impact.

This should be seen, however, in the context of rising public transport costs²⁹:

“the general scenario offered within the analysis is of a public transport sector that is under pressure from increasing real costs running at 2% or more over the rate of inflation, and therefore getting more expensive in real terms to users”.

Commission for Integrated Transport (2008)

Local transport in England is funded through Local Transport Plans, which describe the authority's transport problems and opportunities, consequent policies and strategies, and an implementation programme.

“...many elements of the LTP process were embodied under the TPP framework in England via the Package Approach in the mid-1990s. However, local authorities were able to choose those areas covered by packages by exception rather than extend strategic analysis and complementary multi-modal planning across the board... The TPP Guidance for 1995 highlights the view that the package approach was "expected to become the norm for funding local transport infrastructure in urban areas...”

“Even where they are not submitting a package bid, authorities should present their proposals within the kind of strategic framework that is a prerequisite of a successful transport package. Bids should demonstrate suitable land use policies, and show that full consideration has been given to the potential of public transport, walking and cycling, and improved traffic management, and for improved interchange between transport modes.

“Despite this gradual shift in emphasis, the introduction of LTPs in place of TPPs from 1999 onwards must be seen in the context of a policy shift by Government away from funding major local highway schemes to an approach centred on demand and traffic management.”³⁰

²⁹ Commission for Integrated Transport (2008) *Cost issues in public transport operation*.
<http://www.cfit.gov.uk/docs/2008/cipto/index.htm>

³⁰ Atkins (2002) *Local Transport Plans: process evaluation. Chapter 2: Situation analysis*. Report for the Department for Transport.
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/policy/mainreport?page=11>

The 'key elements of a good LTP'³¹ are that it should:

- Tackle congestion
- Improve accessibility
- Deliver safer roads
- Improve air quality, and
- Demonstrably address wider quality of life issues.

Many LTPs are produced in partnership between authorities, since travel and transport do not fit tightly within administrative boundaries.

Stakeholders, expressed the aim of local transport policy as “balanced”:

“Both LTPs had a general policy of trying to ‘reduce the demand for travel by car’ but we probably now have a more mature and sophisticated view of what that means in a practical sense”; LTA Director

“Not anti-car. Encourage sensible use. The policy is to help all users on the network. Protect vulnerable users – pedestrians, cyclists, priority to public transport where sensible”. LTA Director

Note also that LTP funds are complemented by (often substantial) specific capital funds such as TIF and the Multi-Modal Studies funds, and that all areas benefit from the Highways Agency and by national rail services. Further, local government revenue spending dwarfs local government capital spending. Some of the revenue resources, are, however, used to support transport policy and delivery. The example below is from Greater Manchester³²:

³¹ Department for Transport (2006) *Full guidance on Local Transport Plans: second edition*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltpl/guidance/fltp/fullguidanceonlocaltransport3657>

³² Greater Manchester Joint Transport Team (2006) *Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan: LTP1 delivery report*. <http://www.gmltp.co.uk/localTransportPlanDocs.asp>

Table 4: Greater Manchester LTP1 complementary revenue funding (£000s)

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Highway structural maintenance	21,708	30,179	21,599	20,209	20,326
Street light maintenance	11,027	11,335	10,742	10,279	12,240
Street light energy	5,615	5,008	5,525	10,459	6,685
Cyclic maintenance	14,601	17,229	19,779	17,721	20,229
Winter maintenance	4,225	3,768	4,381	5,712	4,945
Bridges / structural maintenance	2,312	1,393	1,621	1,537	1,476
Traffic management & safety	3,011	4,205	4,837	4,224	3,584
Urban traffic control	4,833	3,568	3,436	3,245	3,258
Greater Manchester Transportation Unit			769	611	649
Road safety education, training & publicity					2,127
School crossing patrols	4,958	5,563	5,560	5,765	3,907
Car parking	3,193	1,081	4	1,739	-1,758
Concessionary fare support	44,360	42,260	39,990	40,617	35,664
Subsidised bus services	8,100	9,870	13,650	12,606	14,866
School transport	7,450	7,330	7,980	8,056	8,607
Metrolink	1,260	820	3,460	2,257	1,194
Accessible transport	4,510	4,620	5,800	5,834	6,030
Rail	60,340	73,520	81,480	70,140	60,684
Passenger facilities and services	6,220	2,870	11,910	4,032	5,044
Finance costs	29,531	31,220	49,347	55,077	29,961
Planning & design	3,410	1,989	1,602	1,530	2,297
Other	14,949	9,221	6,329	5,955	5,416
TOTAL	255,905	275,334	299,801	283,743	239,762

2.8 Summary

In the late 1990s and around the turn of the century, there was cross-party agreement that if the growth of car traffic continued at its late 20th-century pace, the environmental, congestion and quality of life impacts would be unacceptable. This led to a series of measures, by both Conservative and Labour governments, aimed at reducing the growth of traffic and, in urban areas at least, reducing the level of traffic.

There is very little evidence of a fundamentally 'anti-car' policy in any UK government within living memory. Indeed, there has been and will remain a strong 'behaviour change' rhetoric, but realistic aspirations for car use have been to slow down traffic growth or, at best, to achieve a stabilised level of car use.

Research and experience have led to a clear policy orientation of trying to reduce the proportion of people travelling from the same A to the same B in separate cars. That is, in town centres and in other areas where realistic alternatives to the car can be provided, people are encouraged to use those alternatives. Research continues into means and opportunities for applying these 'behaviour change' policies, but there is no pretence that the car will become anything less than the main mode of travel in the UK.

3 GOVERNMENT POLICIES WITH UNINTENDED / INEXPLICIT CONSEQUENCES FOR CAR USE

3.1 Transport in a wider context

Since the objectives for transport are set in a wider context, it is useful to look at the government's wider objectives. Also, since the location and management of other services and facilities affect transport and travel demand, it is necessary to understand the policies, objectives and performance measures to which other services are subject. This short review cannot cover the evolution of policy throughout the public sector since 1995, so it focuses on the present incentives upon travel generators, with a view to understanding their capacity and motivation to reduce travel or travel by car.

The early work on indicators and measurement across government resulted in a plethora of indicators. One local authority reported having 240 Key Performance Indicators, or one for every working day of the year. The Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007 set a framework of 30 cross-governmental PSAs (Public Service Agreements). There is still some departmental reporting against the 2004 Spending Review (SR04), but the primary delivery targets are in the PSAs³³.

PSA no. 5 is

"Deliver reliable and efficient transport networks that support economic growth".

The DfT is also responsible for contributing to other PSA targets, such as environment, economy, opportunity for all.

³³ Cabinet Office (2007) *Comprehensive spending review*.
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/annualreport/dept2008/html/csr_2007.aspx

The Department's PSA on local public transport is, by 2010, to increase the use of public transport (bus and light rail) by more than 12 per cent in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region.

3.2 Core service areas

The provision of education and health services are most often identified as the creator of car journeys or exclusion. Certainly, there is good evidence for the latter. Recent reports on LTP delivery are showing stronger case studies of partnerships with these sectors. Nonetheless, the efficiencies gained from consolidating health and (post-primary) education on larger sites are likely to outweigh transport considerations. This was acknowledged in our interviews:

“The health sector will reorganise to concentrate care and you can see the business case for that. To some extent, transport is just expected. Everybody expects transport to sort itself out.” LTA Director

“All the drivers in education and health are against putting services in local areas. They do consult us, but it’s more ‘if we close these four to make one, where is the best place to put it?’.” LTA Director

The only area in which there was a sense of non-co-operation was housing. This is seen as significant, because where people live in relation to services is critical to their means of access.

“Their attitude is ‘it’s our baby and we’re going to run it and you can jump on board if you like’.” GO Transport Lead

Although in some areas housing is being planned to fit with accessibility objectives:

“We’re talking to planners, so development is along key corridors. Housing growth points are along the corridors. Influence of spatial factors on travel behaviour is important.” LTA Transport Planner

These policy areas might be better explored with a wider range of interviews.

3.3 Regional policy

There has been a growing trend towards developing policy at regional level, in order to allow the interactions between policy areas and across administrative boundaries to be better taken into account. This has included the strengthening of the Government Office function in the late 1990s, through the commissioning (with GO leads) of the Multi-Modal Studies³⁴ around the turn of the century, to the discussion and introduction of regional spending allocations across housing, economic development and transport. This last fits well with the 'certainty' of funding given by the LTP's five-year allocation.

The most immediate impact on transport planning has been the policy and delivery linkages from the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Regional Economic Strategies (RES) to Local Area Agreements for delivery.

"The timing of the introduction of the new instruments for spatial policy (RSS, LDF, Sustainable Communities, LTP, LAA/MAA, Accessibility Planning, etc.) has not been sequential. But they are coming into synch now. There is a decision-making tree, with internal and cross-boundary connectivity." LTA Director

These connectivities were seen as spatial and professional – there is internal connectivity within transport decision making at the different levels of local government affecting one place; there is spatial connectivity with other transport decisions in the region. There is also cross-professional connectivity between transport and planning in each place and in the region.

This cross-boundary professional linkage tends to be only at the transport, planning, environment and economic face. Health, education, etc. are on separate paths to a large extent, though the accessibility planning agenda has helped.

"Working closely with the environment agency, housing, Highways Agency. The LAA process has been helpful in that. MAA will help. The Accessibility Planning agenda has helped a lot. Transport is not always the solution now." GO Transport Lead
"The Local Transport Bill fits nicely with the MAA." GO Transport Lead

³⁴ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) *Guidance on the methodology for multi-modal studies*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/economics/rdg/multimodal/>

There was some cynicism:

“Local Transport Bill - probably was going to be about charging, so now left with changes in governance.”

“Can change the structure, but we’re going to have the same politicians.”

The diagram below represents these linkages and shows where the LTP fits:

Figure 6: Regional and local decision making and delivery



The diagram shows ‘National Policy Statements’ (NPSs) at the top level of decision making. These were introduced by the Planning Act, 2008³⁵ and are to be drafted and consulted on during 2009. Although the NPSs will form the top layer of policy and strategy, they do have a different role. They will express the national need for certain types of infrastructure and identify what considerations should be taken into account when proposing a project to meet these infrastructure needs.

³⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (accessed March 2009) *Planning Act 2008*. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyimplementation/reformplanningssystem/planningbill/>

The NPSs will guide the decisions of the new Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)³⁶. By implication, both the schemes of national importance and the policy underlying them have an influence on the shaping and delivery of Regional Spatial Strategies. This is especially true in transport, where the ‘threshold’³⁷ for inclusion in the NPS includes all railways wholly in England and “*all trunk roads and motorways where the Secretary of State is or will be the highways authority*”.

Since the Highways Agency has only recently been drawn into the Regional Strategies in a formal way, rather than as a consultee, this could have a significant effect on the operation of the new governance arrangements. In order to make the effect of the NPSs constructive rather than destructive, there is a commitment to “*thorough and effective public consultation in the production of national policy statements*”. The intention is that regional and local bodies in all sectors, as well as “*citizens and communities*” should have an opportunity to influence the NPSs. Thereafter, the NPSs should be taken into account in regional and local strategies and plans as these are updated over time.

Under the Sub-National Review (see below), the RSS and RES will be replaced by one document, led by the RDAs (Regional Development Agencies). There was no great concern about the RDA being non-elected, as regional political organisation has been strengthened in recent years.

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) were seen in the 2008 interviews as successfully focusing growth in corridors that can be well served by public transport. “*This is in the light of a fall in the proportion of trips into city centres. More dispersed land use and employment has pulled trips out.*” Policies to encourage ‘sustainable economic growth’ are aiming mainly at providing public transport in these new areas of demand and building them, rather than continuing dispersal.

The authorities saw the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as the sensible response to the land use pattern with which they are now settled:

³⁶ DCLG (2009) *Infrastructure Planning Commission implementation: route map*.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/routemap.pdf>

³⁷ Planning Help (2009) *Thresholds for infrastructure projects considered by the IPC*.

<http://www.planninghelp.org.uk/planning-system/planning-for-major-infrastructure-projects/major-infrastructure-thresholds-for-infrastructure>

“Complexity of travel routes built up over 30 years. Employment is dispersed, as are services. It’s almost getting to the situation where people live in the city and work on the outskirts.” LTA Director

“Development (has been) around motorway junctions.” LTA Director

“Cities hard-hit by the last recession tended to invite inward investment at almost any cost, sometimes lax about development. The future does look better, however, as the cities tend now to be more diversified so are better placed to withstand the next recession. Also, the planning structure is stronger, with RSS pushing towards development on corridors which can be served by public transport.” LTA Director

The historical legacy is not always negative: cities with historically low congestion have found it easier to devote space to bus lanes etc. before car levels build.

The regional allocations were first introduced as ‘indicative’: for transport, that meant that regions were given an indication of the sum they would have been allocated if spending were regionally determined, and were invited to advise the Secretary of State on the prioritisation of major schemes under the Local Transport Plans *and* among the Highways Agency schemes, apart from those on roads of “the greatest strategic national and international importance”³⁸.

The indicative allocations were substantial:

Table 5: Indicative regional allocations (£ million)

	Indicative allocations			Forward assumptions		planning
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Transport	708	724	738	752	767	783
Housing	1449	1528	1695	1729	1763	1799
Economic development	1784	1864	1910	1948	1987	2027
Total	3941	4116	4343	4429	4517	4609

³⁸ HMT, DTI, DfT and ODPM (2005) *Regional funding allocations: guidance on preparing advice*. http://www.emra.gov.uk/publications/documents/RFA_guidanceJul05.pdf

The 2005 guidance says:

“The rationale for inviting regions to give advice on policy development and public spending decisions based on realistic funding assumptions for transport, housing and economic development is clear. Firstly, housing, transport and economic development often entail investment for a number of years and require sensible planning so that the right resources focus on the right development at the right time. Secondly, decisions on economic development, transport and housing are inter-related and inter-dependent and decisions taken in one of these areas have an impact on the others. Thirdly, projects or other kinds of strategic interventions in these areas tend to have impacts that cross over local authority boundaries, but are often not nationally significant”.

Importantly, this early guidance also makes the link with the regional strategies within which Local Transport Plans are set:

“These indicative allocations are intended to enable regions to better align their strategies and provide an enhanced input into Government policy development and public spending decisions that affect the regions. The indicative allocations should also enable regions to ensure their Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) and other regional strategies are based on realistic funding assumptions”.

An independent report³⁹ on Regional Funding Allocations also makes the point that the next iteration of these regional decision making processes may be more effective:

“The RFA process has helped to strengthen regional transport partnerships, enhance the evidence base and facilitate inter-governmental relations.

- RFAs were intended to enhance policy coordination. However, because priorities for economic development and housing had already been established there was limited scope for manoeuvre.*
- Transport priorities were essentially developed in isolation, hindering a more holistic approach. In July 2007 the Sub-National Review of Economic*

³⁹ Ayres, S. and Stafford, I. (2008) The implications of regional funding allocations for transport policy in England. University of Bristol, School for Policy Studies, published under the ESRC programme English Regionalism: Rhetoric or Substance? Evaluating Decision Making Procedures for Regional Funding Allocations <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/regionalism/downloads/transportsumm.pdf>

Development and Regeneration (SNR) confirmed that an expanded second round of RFAs would take place. In future rounds, there may be more opportunity to link priorities across all three policy areas as regional strategies are re-drafted”.

The RFA was widely felt to have improved intra-regional and central-regional working, and has been strengthened and extended. There have been criticisms that it has not delivered integrated planning and scheme development across the sectors, but the critics accept that this should improve in the next funding round.

The transport allocation now covers all transport capital expenditure in the Region and is roughly three times the total in each of the years from 2008-11 that it was in the first three years⁴⁰. Contrast the table below with the forward planning assumptions from 2005, in the table above.

Table 6: Regional funding allocations from 2008 on

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011
Transport	2031	2112	2195
Housing	2986	3274	3433
Economic development	2217	2167	2099
Total	7233	7553	7726

The perception in the interviews was that there is still some way to go before the RFA is bedded in properly:

“The process with Regional Transport Allocations is too opaque. Can’t identify the leaders and decision makers. Should take the opportunity in the Bill to change some aspects. Not all. The deliverability of schemes which hang together to support the region is cloudy. Horse trading of schemes leads to a basket which don’t all support sustainable economic growth. Should not have one pattern for all Regions. The RSS is a Good Thing. The Local Transport Bill is a good thing.” LTA Director

⁴⁰ HMT, DIUS, BERR, DfT and DCLG (2008) *Regional funding allocations: guidance on preparing advice*. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/regional_funding_advice300708.pdf

Nonetheless, it was felt that the building blocks are increasingly in place. The current governance reviews and the changes facilitated by the Local Transport Act 2008 should strengthen the process.

3.4 Governance

The greatest impact on transport may arise from changes in Governance. In the Parliamentary session 2005-2006, the Transport Select Committee⁴¹ found:

“...a particular tension between central and local government. The Department for Transport currently looks to local authorities to implement local transport improvements. But this is not a ‘hands off’ approach. The Department sets national priorities and the Government reviews and scores local transport plans against these. The Department then awards capital funding for the ‘integrated transport block’ according to performance, primarily against the national objectives. It also determines which major transport schemes, proposed by local authorities, will be funded by central government...The difficulties created by the current dynamic between central and local government are manifold. It can be seen in the limitations of the Passenger Transport Authorities and the number of major schemes which are never built and the services never run. The existing situation appears to have limited the ambitions of local government—considering the significant levels of investment and the planning efforts that have been applied, the scale of local transport improvements actually implemented since 2000 is somewhat disappointing. There has been a regrettable failure to achieve the aspirations of the transport White Papers. Some local authorities have made some ‘easy wins’, but it is sensible to acknowledge that a lack of clarity on the part of Government has contributed to poor performance against targets such as public transport use, cycling levels, local road congestion, climate change and air quality. In the interests of an efficient and integrated transport system, this impasse must be overcome.”

⁴¹ House of Commons Transport Committee (2006) *Local transport planning and funding*. Twelfth report of Session 2005-06. HC 1120 London: TSO
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmtran/1120/1120.pdf>

The Select Committee acknowledged, however, that

“The structure of local government is under review and the conclusions of the local government White Paper, expected this autumn, may substantially influence what powers and funding local authorities have available to improve transport.”

Real changes for transport programme governance are arising from the “Sub National Review” (Sub-national economic development and regeneration review, or SNR). The SNR was prompted by the seminal report *State of the English Cities*⁴², which was a response to the 2000 White Paper⁴³. The *State of the English Cities* report aimed to assess urban conditions and drivers of urban change and to consider the impact of government policies upon cities and on local, regional and national success. It had four main themes: “social cohesion; economic competitiveness and performance; liveability and governance”. The *State of the Cities* report found, critically, that there was a lot of good to be said about English Cities.

Many cities have repositioned themselves after the post-industrial slump and have a broader economic and social base, as well as vibrant living environments. They are better placed to face uncertainty in the future. Nonetheless, social problems remain in cities in many countries. The challenge is to achieve economic success combined with social justice.

From our perspective, the key note of *State of the Cities* was that:

“The policy climate for cities in the past was not sufficiently helpful to city leaders and their partners... The balance of powers and resources between national, regional and local governments should allow English cities to benefit from the freedoms, resources and responsibilities found in the more successful European and North American cities.”

“In England the majority of strategic decisions are taken for cities by central government rather than by cities themselves. This is particularly true about the main economic drivers of competitiveness. In most cases central government departments... take and fund the key decisions that affect city competitiveness...”

⁴² DETR (2006) *State of the English cities*. London: HMSO

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/state4>

⁴³ ODPM (2000) *Towards the future: our towns and cities: delivering an urban renaissance*.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/citiesandregions/pdf/154869.pdf>

Local authorities overall have limited influence as do regional agencies... Central departments are overwhelmingly the prime influence on policies for all the drivers, whether through policy framing, steering or funding. English cities are highly reliant on weak governance arrangements such as voluntary collaborations and partnerships to develop and implement strategies for maintaining or improving the competitiveness of their local economies”.

The report contrasts this weakness with successes in London stemming from more powerful integrated local governance.

Although the *State of the Cities* came from a different ‘family tree’⁴⁴ from the transport policies described here, there are elements into which transport has already been drawn – in particular, Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements. Overall, the local government and cities policy stream is expected to have a profound impact on transport planning and delivery. It should also have an impact on the commitment of other policy areas to consider transport and accessibility issues in their own planning, investment and service delivery.

“The government has recognised the need to integrate different departments by giving them joint targets for improved urban performance”.

The conclusion calls for a strategic review of the roles and responsibilities of different agencies. This review should cross current administrative boundaries and should cover all aspects that affect ‘liveability’, including transport:

“Investment in public transport is having a positive impact upon liveability in our cities. Public transport accessibility could be included in a liveability audit”.

⁴⁴ E.g. the 2000 White Paper on Towns and Cities, the Egan review, the Urban Task Force, the Local Government Act 2000, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Social Exclusion Unit, as well as the ‘Best Value’ requirement for services which replaced Compulsory Competitive Tendering and introduced a commitment to continuous improvement across service areas.

Arising from this, the brief for the Sub National Review⁴⁵ was:

“consider the optimal geographical levels for governance and decision making for functions directly linked to successful economic development and regeneration of deprived areas;

- *map the current governance arrangements and incentives for encouraging economic growth and regeneration at all sub-national levels, establishing in particular the interfaces between regional and local institutions;*
- *establish the value for money and effectiveness of key current interventions for encouraging regional economic growth, and develop proposals for improvements”*

... along with specific questions relating to deprivation, in order to build on the series of central-local-regional government initiatives covering devolved decision making, regional economic growth, productivity, neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion.

Although arising from the State of the Cities report, the SNR findings⁴⁶ extend to all aspects of local and regional governance:

“The review’s conclusions will help to ensure that: local authorities and Regional Development Agencies are empowered to spread economic well-being and opportunity to everyone in their region;

- *sub-national structures are simplified, with strengthened accountability;*
- *objectives for promoting growth and tackling deprivation are clear, focused and relevant; and*
- *policy decisions that affect economic well-being are taken at the right spatial levels”.*

The SNR findings made firm proposals which continue the trend away from separate decision making for separate functions, and brings transport within other economic and social decision making frameworks:

⁴⁵ HMT (2006) *Terms of reference for the sub-national economic development and regeneration review.*

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sub-national_economic_development_regeneration_review.htm

⁴⁶ HMT, BERR and DCLG (2007) *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration.*

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sub-national_economic_development_regeneration_review.htm

“Recognising that our cities and towns are often the engines of economic growth and that many economic markets operate at the level of sub-regions, including city-regions, the Government will:

- allow sub-regions to strengthen sub-regional management of transport, and including the possibility of giving greater long-term certainty of funding for transport where suitable governance arrangements exist, as part of the Local Transport Bill;*
- develop proposals for Multi-Area Agreements to allow groups of local authorities to agree collective targets for economic development issues;*
- work with interested sub-regions to explore the potential to allow groups of local authorities to establish statutory sub-regional arrangements which enable pooling of responsibilities on a permanent basis for economic development policy areas beyond transport”.*

The growth of this policy structure appears exemplary: a series of reports which suggested the need for broad-based research; that research advised a specific review; that review advised governance changes which are currently making their way through Parliament. In the long run, it will be fascinating to see whether the lived outcomes are different as a consequence of this thoroughgoing policy making process.

3.5 Summary

The key point to take from this review is that policy affecting transport has evolved in a structured and linear fashion over the last decade or so. Admittedly, transport policy itself, subject to such emotive media scrutiny, has sometimes appeared to waver between traffic reduction and ‘moderation’. Aside from the hype, the reality is that local and regional transport has been moving towards a concerted pattern of planning, integrated closely with economic and social policies at the local and regional level. Increasingly, this ‘local and regional’ structure has encompassed strategic roads.

The overall effect has been that transport delivery is becoming more *needs based*, more negotiated and is increasingly embedded in structures that move it away from the rhetoric. The concern expressed by policy makers and practitioners throughout our interviews was that a new government might break down the hard-won cohesion across political and sector boundaries.

3.5.1 *The outcomes*

The headline outcome is that car use appears to have stabilised, in aggregate.

In more detail, the Department reports⁴⁷:

- In the seven years to 2007/08, bus and light rail patronage increased by 19 per cent (against a PSA target of a 12% increase by 2010 over 2000 levels).
- In the last year, passenger journeys on local buses in England rose by 1.3 per cent. This was driven by an increase in bus patronage in London of 4.8 per cent with passenger journeys in the rest of England falling by 1.5 per cent.
- Over the same period, passenger journeys on trams and light rail systems in England increased by 4.3 per cent.

These figures exceed the general targets, though there is a fall in bus use outside London as a whole. It would be interesting to examine where there have been rises and falls, to see whether it is possible to identify the triggers for ridership change. It is worth noting that the new concessionary fares regime made no difference in London and some other Metropolitan areas, where free concessionary fares regimes have existed for many years.

Local transport plan progress reports, which provide detailed reporting against strategies and objectives, not only scheme delivery, tend to show a more finessed picture of change in travel.

The interviews with policy makers for this study reflected this subtlety. Car ownership and use were seen as having changed:

- A substantial proportion of cars in the city during the day are on business. Not 'to and from work'. "There has been a huge growth in white vans and service vehicles. E-economy is dependent on deliveries rather than journeys. It's not a personal behaviour only."
- There has been a big jump in women's car ownership and use.

⁴⁷ Department for Transport (2008) *Public transport statistics bulletin GB: 2008 edition*. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/public/annualbulletins/publictransportstatsbu108>

- Car ownership among the ethnic community in Birmingham is higher than among the white community.
- Cycling and motorcycles account for 1.5% mode share each in the city. We would need to quadruple cycling to have any impact at all (on car mode share).
- Ownership is going up but private residential car parking spaces are falling. Residents' parking schemes recently can't be solved by residents' permits, because there are more cars than spaces. Residential permit schemes only work where there is an imported problem.
- The trend in car ownership and use will depend on fuel prices.

There have also been observable changes in the performance on the local network in recent years:

- Traffic has generally stabilised and in some urban areas is slightly declining, but congestion remains a problem, even in smaller towns and cities.
- Public transport use indicators are going up.
- According to one LTA Director "Bus operators are investing in new fleet here: that must be evidence of confidence". The other Directors made similar comments.
- Bus operators agree that they are seeing growth "but it is difficult to separate out the noise from Senior Citizen free travel, price of petrol, economic downturn etc."
- "For most people, commuting by car into city centres is neither quicker, nor do they have a space to park. Convenience and speed are more powerful determinants (of mode choice)."

Interestingly, the property developer perspective is in favour of public transport access, although this depends to a large extent on the purpose of the building:

"If you take offices, one of the very clear phenomena over the last 20 years, including in the provinces though not to the same extent, it isn't tough to get a planning consent but increasingly few people commute by car so it's logical, from a business perspective, to put offices close to public transport." Property developer

"The retail position is much more complicated – any large retail development has had a large amount of car parking space irrespective of the public transport." Property developer

When asked what conditions would have to exist to attract investment, the answers were pragmatic:

“Depends on use. Wouldn’t seek to develop a site with poor access and you get enough choice of sites not to have to.” Property developer

“Costs 25-30k per underground car parking space. Not economic to do it. Not policy.”
Property developer

3.5.2 Current policy trends

The current policy is clearly towards ‘balance’: the appropriate mode for the situation. There were some concerns about this:

“All modes being treated equally means preserving the bias in favour of car”. Property developer

There was a view that car dependence is often situational and that it causes or compounds social exclusion:

“Car dependence is fine if you have a car, but if it’s a car dependent community and you don’t have access to a car, so you find difficulty with work, health, education – it becomes a spiral”. LTA Director

“The car is both liberating and a problem.” LTA Director

Shifts in demand are also expected, some of which will work for and some against car dependence:

- Changing (changed) nature of urban employment: large, peripheral manufacturing jobs have diminished both absolutely and in proportion. Will have a substantive impact on travel patterns, and therefore on development demand.
- Ageing population – car use and car dependence is higher. Many can’t catch a bus, have to drive or be driven everywhere. There will be a lot more of that.

- Public transport connections do not supply access to the range of work opportunities that the car network does: *“Once the skills gap is plugged, people need access to opportunities that they have perceived as out of their area”*.

The main optimism arises from the steady layering of policies in different areas to combine to make integrated social and economic policy in which transport plays a part.

“Sub-regional planning is overcoming former decision-making boundaries. Authorities are working together which, ten years ago, might have opposed each others’ ideas almost on principle”. LTA Director

Government Offices have key action plans across problems: worklessness, climate change, healthy weight. Politicians are focused on wider issues, but transport can be expressed in those terms. Local examples were climate change and carbon reduction, national examples were worklessness and young people. Transport behaviour change fits with that (and other agendas: health, community, social services). That being the case, messages about car use can be fitted into that context.

The concern for the future is parallel: will the new structures be allowed to bed in? There was a widespread concern that a new government might sweep away the current policies, not only emerging ideas on governance, but even basic structures such as LSPs, LAAs, LTP and accessibility planning.

“Will all the work be overturned in a wave of new initiatives?” GO Transport Lead

Local government structures remain complex: Counties are the strategic planning authority, but planning powers sit with Districts. In Metropolitan areas, centrally located PTEs take very local public transport decisions (bus stop location, for example), but the Districts determine highway priorities and management. In County areas, the County has the bus role, but the District the parking powers and the planning powers. In Unitary Authorities, the powers are within one hierarchical structure, but the resources are usually very small.

4 CONCLUSION

A review of policy since the car dependence report in 1995 confirms a number of unsurprising facts:

- The Government never stopped spending on provision for roads, and investment has remained broadly stable even while car traffic has levelled off;
- The car is the main mode of travel;
- Structural factors make the car likely to remain the main mode;
- Mode shift aspirations have been a theme since the 60s. It is not a new idea since 1995. Mode shift aspirations are driven by environmental and social factors, as well as the tendency of traffic to cause problems for other traffic;
- The 1995 Car Dependence report contributed to a more focused approach of improving realistic alternatives to the car for some journeys and in some places, and encouraging the choice of those alternatives;
- This more focused approach has led to significant improvements in assessing the impacts of policies, strategies and individual schemes and programmes;
- Mode shift in urban centres and in growth corridors is still viewed as a sensible and achievable target by practitioners, all of whom can identify areas in which the 'tried and tested' mode shift policies have not yet been applied.

None of that is particularly revolutionary. The strong and heartening finding here is that current transport policy and delivery mechanisms are set within an increasingly integrated framework, both within transport and across other sectors. Further, these cross-sector frameworks have been built upon a solid framework of research, with regulation and policy following clear and cumulative recommendations. There is still some way to go before the whole works smoothly, but there is a good deal of optimism that these frameworks are already making a difference and have the potential to do more.

It appears that car use, in aggregate, is not growing; it appears that significant mode shift is being achieved and repeated across the country through targeted small-scale initiatives in towns and cities, at attractors, and with key groups of people. It also appears that there remains considerable scope for extending these achievements. As a profession, we know a

great deal more about what works and where; as a society, we are moving land use development towards corridors which can be served by other means than the car.

The obvious consequence of many car journeys being replaced by other means (including not travelling) is that the car journeys we make are less likely to be subject to increased congestion and delay.

From a policy-makers perspective, the observation is that policy may well be working, and the conditions seem to be in place to build on emerging success. However, there is a great deal more to be done, as the interviews with local authorities, regions and stakeholders showed, but there do seem to be real successes and they have shown themselves capable of replication in different towns and cities across the country.

The car is going to remain the main mode of travel and where it is the most appropriate mode, this is surely not a bad thing. Evidence is provided in other chapters of this report that the car brings many benefits. But if mode shift can be achieved for those journeys where car is not the most appropriate mode, then everyone benefits, the car user as well as those without access to cars.

From here, the critical task is to understand what is working, where and why. From this, policy and delivery can be better focused to deliver the co-ordinated objectives now expressed in policy: a balance of economic, social and environmental objectives, with transport essential to every element.

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